

Promoting Financial Giving

For all of us life seems to move on increasingly quickly. This year, it will be more important than ever to make sure that we continue to practise good stewardship in our parishes. Some will, of course, be anxious about how the year will progress and what effect the economic climate might have on them. Nonetheless, stewardship matters need to continue to be at the forefront of our thinking.

We have many regular and committed givers in our congregations. We need to thank them for this and encourage them to continue. You will know your parish best and approaches to financial giving will differ but, as a general rule, we just need to keep on doing what we are doing now.

This leaflet aims to provide some hints and tips to help churches encourage regular giving.



Encouraging regular giving

There are four areas of stewardship ‘good practice’ which make the biggest difference to giving in our churches.

1. Preach and teach holistically on money and stewardship

Jesus taught frequently on the use of money and possessions and we should be brave enough to do the same!

Try to:

- preach on giving and Christian life at least twice a year
- include stewardship matters in home group material
- make the most of links with the Lectionary as appropriate.

2. Link giving to the provision of ministry and mission

Make sure your congregation knows where your money is going and why it matters. Tell them about the difference their gifts make to the work of your church, both locally and in the wider world.

3. Hold an annual review

A simple giving programme at the same time each year will encourage people to review their giving.

4. Say “thank you”

Acknowledge giving to your church both privately and publicly. The minimum that a regular giver receives should be an annual personal letter.

But remember

- Not all givers are at the same stage of Christian discipleship and financial commitment so tailor your message to specific group such as “key leaders”, “non Gift Aiders” or “occasional attendees”.

Managing what we already have – being good stewards

In order to cope in 2009 it will be important to be careful with what we have now.

- Get the PCC to review the budget every quarter and take any necessary action
- Market your church's baptism, funeral and wedding services more actively but make sure you are charging realistic fees based on actual costs e.g. heating, choir.
- Take every opportunity to collect Gift Aid, especially for one off gifts.
- Chase those people you think could Gift Aid their gifts and encourage them to join the scheme.
- Keep spending on regular building maintenance – it will be cheaper in the long run.
- Carry out an environmental audit of your church.

Communication

It's always important to help your congregation understand what is happening with your church's finances.

- Produce simple quarterly statements of your church's financial position and make sure they are well publicised.
- Regularly report back on the progress and impact of the different ministry activities. Emphasise the benefits and impact of your mission activities.
- Provide tax-year Gift Aid statements to givers. This will help to remind higher rate tax payers to claim personal tax refunds on their self assessment forms. Encourage them to donate it back.

Fundraising

You may find that fundraising is harder hit than regular giving. Fundraising events may result in less net income so think about running fewer events, but making them even better.

And finally

There is evidence that a gloomy message about the recession can result in lower levels of giving. We do need to encourage our congregations while, of course, taking account of the economic climate and how this effects people.

Resources to help you

We can help you design and run a stewardship campaign and have a wide range of material available to support parishes including two booklets we published last year:

NOT JUST WHEN WE'RE BROKE Practical steps parishes can take to promote financial giving.



KEEPING STEWARDSHIP IN THE PICTURE Ideas for those who teach and preach tackle the subject of Christian Stewardship.

There is also a DVD available which illustrates the link between our church's mission and Southwark's Fairer Shares system



To get hold of these and other stewardship resources contact:
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